



Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

I am writing to share some exciting news: The wait is over—we are going to build a Hopkins student center.

As many of you may know, Johns Hopkins students' quest for a social gathering space is almost as old as Hopkins itself.

In 1884, just eight years after we opened our doors to our first students, 25 of our undergraduates decided they needed a place to gather that wasn't about academics. This might sound familiar. Luckily, Baltimore banker Eugene Levering donated the funds for a building, which became the original Levering Hall. Not two years later, however, the university suddenly needed more space for academic programming, and the original Levering got displaced—literally. It was set on jacks, raised up, and trucked across the street, as local Baltimoreans looked on.

In the ensuing years, generations of Hopkins students and administrations have pursued the holy grail of an ideal gathering space for our students: from hanging out in the Merrick Barn circa 1916 to the re-establishment of Levering Hall at Homewood in 1929 and through its multiple expansions over the next half century, to the launch of the Mattin Center in 2001, and, of course, to our realization that the MSE and the Brody Learning Commons have always been places where our students make themselves at home.

Yet even as the buildings have evolved, the pleas for a more perfect student union have resounded across the decades, from the pages of the 1925 Half-Century Committee's report to the SGA's appeals last year in the News-Letter.

And understandably so. As the needs of our student body have evolved, so has the desire for a different and dedicated student center taken hold. This will be a new kind of space for us—one that is not academically focused, but entirely social by design. Open to all, reserved for none, and boasting the kind of flexible spaces that invite connection and collaboration, this will be a place where athletes and actors, step teams and SGA members can gather side by side, perhaps to form new friendships, launch new projects, or simply to trade tips about what classes to take next semester. It will be a site to which everyone lays equal claim and from which everyone benefits. And one that will evolve with our community as we continue to evolve and change over time.

In addition to serving our students, the center will provide a welcoming entrance to our campus at the intersection of 33rd and Charles streets, which includes the location of the present Mattin Center. Thanks to the efforts of so many across our university, as well as extraordinarily generous philanthropic support, we can now begin the next stage of our quest: to design and build it.

As we embark on this process, we will need the help of our entire community, especially our students. Our aim is to create a building that allows the spark of creativity embodied in the Mattin Center and other locations around campus to continue to flourish, serving our community's needs and becoming an enduring and iconic addition to the Hopkins landscape.

This will be a multiyear effort led by Alanna Shanahan, director of Athletics and Recreation, in collaboration with our Student Affairs and Facilities teams. Later this spring, she will share more details about how to stay informed, offer feedback, and get involved, including the opportunity to participate in an advisory committee that will play a key role in this important undertaking.

We are truly grateful to the many generations of students—including this one—who have advocated for such a space. Today, you can say that your legacy, your gift, has been not only to add your voices to that call but to have had that call answered.

I look forward to working together to concretize this dream we've all shared for so long.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Daniels  
President